

# Bombing Black People: The Philadelphia Police's War on MOVE

Global Research News Hour Episode 129

By [Michael Welch](#) and [Linn Washington](#)

Global Research, May 22, 2019

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR, Police State & Civil Rights](#)

*"May 13, 1985 is a day that shall live in infamy, but for far more reasons than the obvious. It was the death knell of a system committing suicide. It proved that a man called John Africa spoke powerful truths when he spoke about the nature of the system as corrupt, as flawed, as poisoned. Every day past that date has only proved it even more." -Mumia Abu-Jamal, from a [May 9 2010 radio essay](#)*

LISTEN TO THE SHOW



Length (58:55)

[Click to download the audio \(MP3 format\)](#)

The only aerial bombing by police ever carried out on US soil was on May 13, 1985, when a Philadelphia police helicopter dropped military grade explosives on the house run by a group of self-styled revolutionaries known as Move. This group, which claims to adhere to principles of non-violence was founded by John Africa in 1972, and was composed mostly, but not exclusively, of African-Americans. They rejected the norms of 20<sup>th</sup> century American society in their dress, grooming, diet and lifestyles, and had come in conflict with authorities on several occasions.[1]

The 1985 bombing claimed the lives of five children and six adults including founder John Africa. Another adult named Ramona Africa, and a child named Birdie Africa were the only survivors of the assault. More than 250 people in the predominantly black middle class neighbourhood were left homeless after more than 60 other homes were destroyed as a result of the aerial bombing, and the fires that followed.[2]

This attack followed a previous assault on August 8, 1978. A police raid on the Move house, then located in the Philadelphia neighbourhood of Powelton village, resulted in the death of police officer James Ramp. The Courts held nine Move members responsible for the death and sentenced them to 30 to 100 years behind bars. [3]

Thirty-seven years later, two of the nine have died in prison under suspicious circumstances. Supporters of the Move 9, as they are called, are appealing to the Philadelphia Parole Board to set the remaining seven members free, now that they have all served their minimum sentences. [4][5]

In this installment of the Global Research News Hour we examine the attacks on Move in the context of a history of police and state repression of the black minority population of the US.

Linn Washington is a journalist and currently serves as an Associate Professor of Journalism at Temple University. He has covered Move almost from the group's beginnings and was present on the scene as a reporter during the 1985 police action against the group. He will put the 1985 Bombing and the events that led up to it in their proper context and establish the failures, as he sees it, of the media to hold those in authority to account.

Ramona Africa is the spokesperson for Move. She served seven years in prison on riot charges following the bombing by Philadelphia police. She and other plaintiffs eventually received a \$1.5 million settlement from the city in connection with the incident. In this interview Ramona provides some background on the group and the police stand-offs in 1978 and 1985, and speaks at length about the unjust incarceration of nine Move members who she explains could not possibly have been responsible for the murder of police officer Ramp.

For more resources on Move, and how to help the Move 9, please visit the following sites:

[onamove.com](http://onamove.com)

[www.move9parole.blogspot.ca](http://www.move9parole.blogspot.ca)

Readers who happen to be in the New York City area may wish to take in the following event:

[NYC Stand in Solidarity in with Parole for the Move 9 – Friday Night 2/12/16](#)

LISTEN TO THE SHOW



Length (58:55)

[Click to download the audio \(MP3 format\)](#)

The [Global Research News Hour](#) airs every Friday at 1pm CT on [CKUW 95.9FM](#) in Winnipeg. The programme is also podcast at [globalresearch.ca](#).

The show can be heard on the Progressive Radio Network at [prn.fm](#). Listen in every Monday at 3pm ET.

Community Radio Stations carrying the Global Research News Hour:

CFUV 101. 9 FM in Victoria. Airing Sundays from 7-8am PT.

CHLY 101.7 FM in Nanaimo, B.C – Thursdays at 1pm PT

Boston College Radio [WZBC 90.3FM NEWTONS](#) during the Truth and Justice Radio Programming slot -Sundays at 7am ET.

[Port Perry Radio](#) in Port Perry, Ontario – Thursdays at 1pm ET

[Burnaby Radio Station CJSF out of Simon Fraser University](#). 90.1FM to most of Greater Vancouver, from Langley to Point Grey and from the North Shore to the US Border. It is also available on 93.9 FM cable in the communities of SFU, Burnaby, New Westminister, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Surrey and Delta, in British Columbia Canada. – Tune in every Saturday at 6am.

Notes:

1) Alan Yuhas (May 13, 2015), The Guardian, “Philadelphia’s Osage Avenue police bombing, 30 years on: ‘This story is a parable’”; <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/may/13/osage-avenue-bombing-philadelphia-30-years>

2) Ibid

3) Emilie Lounsberry (Feb. 28, 2008), The Philadelphia Inquirer, “MOVE members due for parole hearing”; [http://web.archive.org/web/20080411115748/http://www.philly.com/philly/news/homepage/20080228\\_MOVE\\_members\\_due\\_for\\_parole\\_hearing.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20080411115748/http://www.philly.com/philly/news/homepage/20080228_MOVE_members_due_for_parole_hearing.html)

4)<http://www.workers.org/ww/1998/africa0326.php>

5) <http://www.iacenter.org/racism/africa-phil011315//>

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Michael Welch](#) and [Linn Washington](#), Global Research, 2019

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Michael Welch](#)  
and [Linn Washington](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants

permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)